



**W**elcome to the Ripline the BUHABS newsletter, this is the fourth edition of the newsletter this term, which is packed full of things for you. In this issue we have notes from the PUT and the president, information on landowner relations and also information about the up and coming AGM.

### **Up and coming Events**

The BUHABS AGM is coming up and will be held in the students union on the 28<sup>th</sup> March. There are 6 positions that you can stand for, they are union treasure, flying treasurer, secretary, president, social secretary and transport officer. If you interested in standing for any position then please contact Tim Dudman, for further information on each of the positions please see the article below. BUHABS 14th Anniversary dinner this year is on 17<sup>th</sup> March and is in Clifton village at the Muset, just up from the student union. Places are very limited so if you could return the forms as soon as possible. The dinner will cost about £15 and you can bring your own wine if you wish. Finally for those who have still not seen the balloon or helped to set it up or for those people who just want to practice there skills at setting up the balloon. BUHABS is planning getting the balloon out at Will's hall, the date planned is the 27<sup>th</sup> March, but this does depend on the weather, so please check your e-mail to make sure this event is going ahead.

### **Notes From the Editor...**

Finally the weather seems to be getting better, I managed my first flight of the New Year, an hours trip from Bath Railway Field to Old Sodbury. It was a really pleasant trip however the carry out at the end was a little muddy to say the least. Away from the ballooning front we managed to have two socials already this term with more planned for latter in the year. Both turned out to be relatively successful, the indoor ballooning was really good, and it gave chance to see Will Temple attempt to fly and land one of Lee Hoppers model balloons.

Finally I really would encourage people to come to the Anniversary dinner it will give everyone a good chance to get to know one another in an informal setting. And don't forget to sign up, the weather is getting better giving us more opportunities to get the balloon out.

### **The AGM, Positions and Role**

The AGM is nearly here once again, so for those of you who are considering joining the committee this coming year here are some of the positions available and their responsibilities. The AGM itself is planned for the 28<sup>th</sup> March, and will take place in the students union, further details will be sent out closer to the date by e-mail. You can stand for any positions on the committee, if you want to find out how to go about it contact Tim Dudman. If you want to find out further details of the position itself then contact the member who current holds that position and they will be happy to fill you in.

**The President:** The president's responsibility is the smooth running of the society. The position involves helping other committee members when needed, chairing meetings (usually) and keeping members informed about the societies activities. The position is only open to those holding a student union card.

**Secretary:** The secretary is responsible for liaison with sponsors and other external bodies, keeping minutes and other official society business. The secretary is usually the first point of contact with the Society and has to be able to channel information and requests for action quickly and efficiently to the rest of the committee.

**Flying Treasurer:** The flying treasurer is responsible for the money we receive from our sponsors. This includes the payment of the balloon insurance and funding of any events we do for the sponsors. The position also involves keeping the flying accounts.

**Transport Officer:** The transport officer is responsible for cleaning and maintenance of the van and compound.

**Social Secretary:** The social secretary is responsible for organising the social events and for producing the newsletter (although everyone on the committee will help out).

**Union Treasurer:** The union treasurer is responsible for the three accounts, which get audited by the Union every April. This post is not open to finalists.

## Notes From the President...

After being told that Simon Jenkins had started his own regular column entitled notes from the PUT I thought I could not be beaten and decided to write something myself. I possess the literary talents of a four-year-old so please bare this in mind whilst reading.

It is a funny thing this ballooning lark, no two flights are ever the same. It is probably this fact that draws people to our unusual hobby. One day you could be stuck over a field looking for a wind to move you along and another day you can be whizzing along over that field wondering if you will ever find a field big enough to land in. One of the things that may shock you is to find out that we are currently having one of the best winters on BUHABs records. We have already flown eight times this term, and managed another five flights last term. Not bad for a British winter.

For those who are not aware I am intending to stand down as president of BUHABs this year. It is a position that I have held for five years now and I feel that the time has come for me to move on, and give other the opportunity. It is ok, put the tissues away I will still be flying for the club and generally be around. So if you are interested in following in my footsteps or even trying for another position please contact Tim Dudman on how to go about it. I would also encourage members to come along to the 14<sup>th</sup> anniversary dinner. It will be a good chance to meet the committee and talk to them about their role and what it entails. It is also a great excuse to get drunk, so come alone.

Anyway on with my boring ramblings, I thought I would recount one of my favourite flights from last year to try and get you all enthused for ballooning. I was flying the Bristol Fiesta balloon down on the Somerset levels from an outdoor show. The weather had been superb all weekend and on this particular flight I only had two passengers so I decided to do something a bit different. I would try and go 10,000ft in the air. This is as high as you can go without running out of oxygen. We began the adventure and I informed my passengers what we would attempt and they seemed up for it so off we went. Upon reaching 6,000ft and climbing although it was a warm July morning the air was cold and crisp and so fresh. At this altitude all the pollution is way below you and the air is so fresh it can really take your breath away. As we approached 10,00ft mark I began to slow our rate of ascent. The view from here is stunning you can actually see the curvature of the earth. We could see all the way to the sea and even see Cornwall and the Welsh mountains. Another balloon had accompanied us up to this altitude and we were less than half a mile from each other, this allowed us to share a truly awesome experience we could shout to each other and we did.

We now had to descend back down which seemed a shame given the great views. However, there were a few bubbly little clouds beginning to form below and this is the evidence of thermals. Flying a balloon in thermals, as any pilot who has done it will tell you is not fun. We put the balloon into a cold decent, this means allowing the balloon to fall at its maximum rate of decent. "OH MY GOD" I hear you cry, but the maximum descent rate of the balloon is no faster than a parachutist under his opened canopy. It took a full twenty minutes to get back down to landing level. We ended up landing in a sports ground in a little village about six miles from where we launched. It was a truly awesome flight and the privilege of seeing the curvature of the earth from a wicker basket, words cannot describe it.

So for theses that haven't flown yet **WHY NOT!** The signing up list has been practically empty over the last few weeks. We only provide the flying service for you and will not come chasing after you if you do not sign up. As I sat all the time the onus is on **YOU** to sign up. By Lee Hooper BUHABS president, but not for much longer.

## **Our responsibilities towards landowners and users**

When we land our balloon on someone's property, we are at best uninvited guests. With the continuing increase in ballooning activities in the Bristol area, it is imperative that balloonists should maintain good relationships with landowners, upon whose goodwill the continuation of our sport depends.

Low flying balloons can cause distress or worse to livestock and balloon landings could cause damage to crops. The pilot is responsible for avoiding low flights over animals and for choosing a landing field that contains no animals or crops, as well as being clear of obstacles, and, if at all possible, next to a road. Grass is often grown for hay or silage and is therefore a crop. Minimum inconvenience to the landowner should always be the pilot's aim. The farmer will not be amused to be asked to get his/her tractor out to retrieve a balloon from an inaccessible place.

There are responsibilities for the crew too, and we ask that all BUHABS members take heed of them. We must always be courteous to landowners, never drive our van onto fields until permission has been obtained and must leave gates as we found them (usually closed). If the crew meets the landowner before the pilot, they should be polite and obtain his/her name and address, in order that the pilot can visit him/her later. If the landowner is at all unhappy, the crew must not enter into discussions, but refer the landowner to the pilot.

A code of conduct was agreed between the British Balloon and Airship Club and the National Farmers' Union, which embodies many of the points mentioned above. In this area, the Western Region of the BBAC runs a landing card and raffle scheme, in which landowners are given a record of the pilot's details and are entered into a raffle for prizes £100 or so. In addition, BUHABS gives the landowner a small token of appreciation after each club flight (currently a BUHABS mug or bottle of wine). This idea is being widely adopted in the ballooning community. BUHABS also offers flights to farmers and other landowners from time to time. By these efforts and a well-publicised and efficient liaison system between balloonists and landowners, mutual understanding is enhanced and problems minimised.

We should also remember that the launch sites we use are not exclusively ours. The Frisbee throwers, dog walkers and onlookers have as much right to be there as we do. We must respect the parks and sports grounds (especially no wheel spinning!) if we are to continue to use them.

BUHABS has some of the highest standards of balloon operations in the area. We are determined to ensure our reputation is maintained; as students it is easy to be labelled as reckless drivers or people who cause problems with landowners. Please bear in mind the points made above when you come out with the BUHABS balloon.

## Notes From The PUT

I thought this issue that I would tell you about my morning training flight on 20<sup>th</sup> February. After a day of un-flyable weather on Saturday, Sunday morning was looking good. After checking the Met Line for a weather report I phoned Lee and we decided on a launch site. The wind was from 110 degrees and we chose to launch from Bath with a plan to land at Keynsham. After spending about half an hour at Coombe Dingle, Tim and I eventually manoeuvred the Van through the ridiculous obstacle course of gates and set off for the union. An impatient Lee phoned us half way there to find out where the hell we were. When we arrived at Bath there were several other balloons in various states of inflation and we set up as quickly as possible to join them. Lee did a briefing and inflated the balloon ready for the off. Then it was time for me to take over. After a passenger briefing I heated the air up to temperature and released the balloon from the van using the quick release. We rose up gently in order to try a practice approach into the next field. Lee's introduction to the exercise was slightly odd 'I'm about to keel over and die – you'll have to land the balloon in the next field!' Not what first time passengers want to hear really? I let some air out of the balloon using the Ripline and brought us gently down to the ground. Excellent! Then we did the same again over the next row of trees. This time the balloon descended using natural cooling with a little adjustment from the whisper burner to slow down the decent. Two good practice approaches in the first five minutes. I was feeling good. We passed over the dual carriageway and came down low on the other side of the road. Too low in fact and I had to burn to get over the hedge. Then I spent the next few minutes flying a sine wave. Not very professional when you're trying to fly straight and level. This playing about put us slightly off track as we were trying to follow the other balloons along the river. I think I must have got over excited at the first two landings. Our next navigation point was a bridge over the river and we continued to follow the water towards Saltford. We could see people out for an early morning walk below and several rowing teams practising their technique. One of our passengers Emily had come out to fly instead of coxing her rowing crew and she managed to get a photo of them as we flew past. We began to descend as we flew over Saltford and were looking to land on a sports field next to Scott & Terry (flying Lee's Giraffe balloon). We were hoping the wind would take us left into the sports field but unfortunately we were too far away by the time we got there (but only just!). We flew on over the railway and consulted the map for alternative landing sites, trying to find a field before we hit (!) the city. We found a suitable gap between some no-landing areas and dropped down for a gentle final landing in a grass field with the view to walking the balloon closer to the road. A couple of camouflaged figures came to view carrying shotguns, which was slightly un-nerving, but they seemed quite interested to see our balloon. The landowner helpfully pointed us towards the gate and we gave him a BUHABS mug for his trouble. Rebecca and I spend 10 minutes dragging the balloon to the gate on the drop line while our great President Hooper (got to keep him happy!) directed from on high in the comfort of his basket. Tim, Bronwyn and Jane arrived to meet us at the gate. We packed up and drove off to a well-earned cooked breakfast in Keynsham. Everyone enjoyed their flight and after refuelling and a change of crew Lee and I flew some new members whose regular and persistent sign up has now paid off. It seems that things are looking up and the weather is now beginning to improve. It's time to start making an effort and getting on the list...



## **BUHABS Anniversary Dinner**

Every year to celebrate the anniversary of the club we go out for dinner. This year is no exception, so to celebrate the 14th anniversary of the club we will be going to The Muset in Clifton (not far from the Student's Union) on Friday 17th of March at 7:30. The cost is £14.50 for 2 courses or £17.50 for 3 courses; there is usually a choice of half a dozen or so dishes for each course including vegetarian options. The restaurant is a BYO so come armed with plenty of wine. If you wish to start earlier you can meet at The Lansdown pub next door beforehand (on Clifton Road opposite The Royal York Cafe).

If you would like to come along please fill out the form below and return to me ASAP at the address below, or email me at [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



## **BUHABS Anniversary Dinner**

Name(s):

Contact number(s):

Email: